

Knowing of your interest in veterans health care, I wanted to share with you a [letter](#) I and several other members of Congress recently sent to Defense Secretary Robert Gates. The letter urges the Defense Department to move quickly to ensure that TRICARE pays adequately for services provided by critical access hospitals. Some of these hospitals have been struggling to stay open due to inadequate reimbursement from government programs such as Medi-Cal. It is essential that we protect military retirees' access to these facilities, which are often the sole providers of acute care in rural communities, including many in Northern California. In addition, I will continue to advocate for legislation that would enhance emergency care access for veterans who are enrolled in the VA health system and who live in remote rural areas.